

2026 SESSION

ENROLLED

HOUSE RESOLUTION NO. 42

Celebrating the life of Paul Gandy Lankford.

Agreed to by the House of Delegates, February 9, 2026

WHEREAS, Paul Gandy Lankford, an esteemed educator who supported and inspired generations of young people and an active volunteer leader in and around Virginia Beach, died on May 7, 2025; and

WHEREAS, Paul Lankford grew up in Southampton County and began his distinguished career in education after graduating from The College of William & Mary in 1969; and

WHEREAS, Paul Lankford initially worked for Virginia Beach City Public Schools as an English teacher at Bayside High School, then served as chair of the English Department at Green Run High School for more than two decades; he subsequently joined Cape Henry Collegiate School, where he taught for another nine years; and

WHEREAS, over the course of his 40-year career, Paul Lankford earned a reputation as a passionate educator who built personal relationships with every student, understanding their individual strengths and weaknesses to help them not only hone their abilities as writers and critical thinkers but also build a strong foundation for lifelong learning; and

WHEREAS, Paul Lankford was awarded the Virginia Teacher of the Year in 1983; and

WHEREAS, Paul Lankford enlivened classroom work with his humor, wit, and colorful fashion sense and relished every opportunity to share his passion for literature and stimulate discussion by reading aloud to students; he further enhanced the learning process by teaching life skills, such as setting a table or writing a thank you note; and

WHEREAS, in 2009, a group of Paul Lankford's former students established a Paul Lankford Fan Club page on Facebook, which has since grown to include hundreds of members, all of whom proudly share their treasured memories of his compassionate mentorship and infectious enthusiasm for learning; and

WHEREAS, highly respected in his field, Paul Lankford was the first high school teacher to be appointed to the Comparative and World Literature Committee of the National Council of Teachers of English and ultimately served as chair of the committee for three years; he also served multiple terms as executive secretary of the Virginia Association of Teachers of English Language Arts and represented teachers in the Commonwealth at national conferences; and

WHEREAS, Paul Lankford further supported the residents of Hampton Roads as a volunteer for the Friends of Virginia Beach Animal Control and the historic Francis Land House, as well as president of the Tidewater Antiques and Arts Association; and

WHEREAS, Paul Lankford enjoyed fellowship and worship with the community as a member of First Presbyterian Church of Norfolk, where he served his fellow congregants as a Stephen Minister; and

WHEREAS, Paul Lankford will be fondly remembered and greatly missed by his wife of 44 years, Deborah; his son, Alan, and his family; and numerous other family members, friends, and former students; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That the House of Delegates hereby note with great sadness the loss of Paul Gandy Lankford, an incomparable educator and a pillar of the community in Virginia Beach; and, be it

RESOLVED FURTHER, That the Clerk of the House of Delegates prepare a copy of this resolution for presentation to the family of Paul Gandy Lankford as an expression of the House of Delegates' respect for his memory.

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